



From the Chair – Peter Griffin



Dear Parents

This week I have had the great pleasure of attending the 'Donkey seller' Nativity on Tuesday and 'Hosanna Rock' in the College chapel on Wednesday. I can only echo Mrs Batson's words of praise and recommendation at the end of both performances – what joy your children gave to you parents and all attending and what gratitude we owe to the staff who work so hard in preparing the children for these. My only regret was not being able to attend being available to attend the Early Years performance on Monday; I found these even more poignant this year as our twin 4 year old grandsons performed in their first school Nativity last week in Kent and my wife and I were so disappointed at not being able to attend in person.

This term we have held three full governor meetings, the most recent being on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December; I am delighted to inform you that Jessica Delaney, mother of Ryan in Reception, has taken on the role of 'parent' governor following Chris Bartup's resignation. Jessica brings great experience to the role having served as a parent governor in her daughter's school a number of years ago. On behalf of all the governors I want to put on record our gratitude to Chris for his energy and many contributions both as a parent governor and as a member of the PTA. I'm optimistic that a new Foundation Governor, appointed by the Archdiocese, will be joining us next term.

You may recall that we wrote to all parents last year about an important decision the GB had taken to formally apply for Our Lady's to become an 'academy' and to join the Multi-Academy Company (MAC) of **Our Lady of the Magnificat** which will eventually be a family of about 24 Catholic schools. We are now on schedule to join the MAC in April 2024; the executive Leader of the MAC and the diocese are assisting us as we seek to recruit a new Headteacher next year. Ideally this would be from April but a September start remains a possibility. Of course we want to mark our appreciation for all the tremendous work undertaken by Mrs Batson during her time as Headteacher so 'watch this space' next term.

One of our key roles as governors is to monitor the financial performance of the school. Like many schools we have to address the issue of falling numbers applying for Reception. We have no spare capacity in 5 of the other 6 year groups but to balance our budget in the long-term we need 15 children entering Reception each year; one of our reasons for opening the pre-school Nursery class was to provide a crucial service to busy working parents but also to provide a pathway so more parents would choose Our Lady's. We are encouraged by the intake into the nursery this year but applications for both Nursery and Reception for September 2023 are crucial so can I encourage you to spread the word for both year groups, especially Reception as we approach the deadline for applications in January. As parents and governors we know that Our Lady's is a fantastic, warm, and welcoming school but as a small village we rely on parents from elsewhere to choose to send their children to us but they will only do so if they are made aware of our existence and nothing beats a

'word of mouth' personal recommendation from parents. A school is only as good as its staff and we at Our Lady's are so thankful to have the services of such skilled and dedicated teachers and support staff. This term we were delighted to confirm the permanent appointment of Mrs O'Connor in her role as Assistant Head as well as welcoming Mrs Price as our Senior Early Years Educator. They make a great team.

Our wrap around before and after school club has seen increased numbers as we return to a more normal post-Covid environment and I encourage more of you to take advantage of warm welcome that Mary and Anna provide and the flexibility that this service provides hard-working parents.

Christmas is such a special time, especially for families with younger children, and I wish you all every blessing and good wishes; the Christmas liturgy for families, led by Fr Teddy, will take place in the College chapel at 5pm on Christmas Eve and parents and children from Our Lady's would be very welcome to attend

Best wishes for a lovely Christmas and Happy New Year

Peter Griffin

Chair on behalf of Our Lady's Governing Body